



## **ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES**

February 16, 2016  
Demmer Shooting Sports, Education and Training Center  
Lansing, Michigan

#### **MEETING LOCATION**

The February 16, 2016 meeting was held at the Demmer Shooting Sports, Education and Training Center in Lansing.

#### **PRESENT FOR THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)**

Rick Briggs, Chair  
Al Bobrofsky  
Ken Buchholtz  
Jonathon Edgerly  
Carolyn Grawi  
Scott Norris  
Kim Woolridge  
Duncan Wyeth

Sharon Ellis (*via conference call*)  
Sarah Peurakoski (*via conference call*)

#### **ABSENT**

Ann Conklin  
Cindy Burkhour  
David Campbell  
Vendella Collins  
Daryl Domke  
Michael Harris  
Marc Russell  
Amy Trotter  
John Witzke

#### **PRESENT FOR THE DNR**

Sharon Schafer, AAC Sponsor  
Stacy Haughey, AAC Upper Peninsula Sponsor (*via conference call*)

#### **PRESENT FROM THE DNR A-TEAM**

Vicki Brown, Wildlife  
Fran Ryan, Forestry  
Lynne Thoma, Fisheries

Erica Moore, Technology Section, Marketing & Outreach  
Christie Bayus, Grants  
Tamara Jorkasky, Grants (*via conference call*)  
Diana Engle, Michigan Historical Center  
Steve Burton, Law Enforcement (*via conference call*)  
Christine Schwerin, Marketing & Outreach  
Mike Evanoff, Parks & Recreation

## **INTERPRETERS**

Janet Jurus and Stacy Dildy

## **OTHERS PRESENT**

Tom Tynan, resident of Howell, Michigan  
Fred Wurtzel, Secretary of the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan and his youth group, "The Michigan Birdbrains"  
Donna Posont, Field Services Director for Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind

## **REGULAR MEETING**

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Briggs called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with roll call. He also acknowledged Mr. Wurtzel and his group of young adults, "The Michigan Birdbrains," a sensational adventurers and science group from various cities around the state; as well as Donna Posont, who is a field guide in Michigan that teaches groups of blind birdwatchers and helps them recognize birds through sound.

Chair Briggs then asked if there were any additions or adjustments to the agenda. No additions or adjustments were offered.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Briggs asked the council if they had any additions or changes to the October 13, 2015 Minutes. No additional changes were offered for the Minutes.

*Chair Briggs requested a motion to approve the October Minutes; Al Bobrofsky motioned to approve; Duncan Wyeth seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried and the October 13, 2015 Minutes were approved.*

### **DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

#### **Executive Updates**

Sharon Schafer, AAC Sponsor, gave an update on department activities that have occurred over the past four months since the council last met.

#### ***Flint Water Crisis***

With the recent water crisis in Flint, several Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff has been temporarily reassigned to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to assist. The DNR Director Creagh will be the interim DEQ Director, Dr. William Moritz (DNR Natural

Resources Deputy) will be the interim DNR Director, William O'Neill (DNR Forestry Chief) will be the interim DNR Natural Resources Deputy, and Debbie Begalle will be the interim Forestry Chief. Dan Lord, the DNR's ADA Coordinator, has also been temporarily reassigned to assist Director Creagh with his responsibilities at DEQ. In addition to being the department's ADA Coordinator, there are a lot of responsibilities that Dan handles, including oversight of all field staff, facilities and the shooting ranges so Sharon is covering his duties until he returns.

An Emergency Command Center has also been activated in Constitution Hall. Many DNR staff have been assigned to work in the command center for two weeks at a time to help with phone calls and other emergency requests related to the Flint water crisis. The DNR is experienced at managing emergency incidents due to fire and law enforcement activities so they are utilizing those skills and teaching others. The DNR is doing everything they can to help with this crisis. In the meantime, the DEQ is conducting a nationwide search for a new director.

Duncan Wyeth asked if there has been adequate communication in Flint with the deaf community.

Tom Tynan, guest, commented that he feels not enough has been done to communicate with the deaf or blind communities, as well as those that do not speak English (i.e. the Hispanic community). He also brought up a very important fact that individuals that are deaf often cannot read.

Duncan responded that the department needs to ensure there is adequate communication with the deaf, blind and non-English speaking communities.

Discussion continued about public service announcements (PSAs) that are not always accessible via screen readers for the blind, nor are they closed captioned for the deaf community. PSAs also may not be seen, heard or read on the internet, television or radio so a back-up plan such as delivering literature door-to-door or leaving materials at locations that are frequented by most (i.e. grocery stores) needs to be considered..

Sharon responded the department is still working towards improving communications; however, she will relay these concerns to the department's management team, the press office and the command center.

The council also recommended reaching out to Sharon Ellis, council member with the Department of Civil Rights, for advice and guidance.

### *Governor's Budget*

Sharon Schafer reported that the Governor's budget was released on February 10, 2016. With all the recent pressures from Flint and the Detroit public school system, the department actually came out considerably well. There will be dollars going towards updating the department's fish hatcheries, updating the Land Ownership Tracking System that keeps track of all 4.6 million acres of land that is managed by the DNR for public use, updating the commercial fish database program, as well as many other projects. The budget will now enter into the legislative process which should be completed in June. That is when the department will know what type of funds will be available for fiscal year 2017, and that information will be posted on the DNR's web site.

## *Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grants*

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board, at their December 2015 meeting, approved \$28 million in grant awards recommended by department staff, covering 70 recreation projects and land purchases. The grant recommendations now have to go through the legislative process for the Governor's approval. Once the grants are awarded by the Governor, they will be posted on the department's web site.

Carolyn Grawi commented that the requirement for applicants to meet accessibility guidelines is an excellent addition to the application process to be considered and scored for funding. It's also great to see interpretive signage and other accessible amenities being included in park development and recreational improvements.

Sharon further commented that the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund will be celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Over \$1 million has been contributed to Michigan's landscape. There will be various events and dedications held around the state throughout the year to celebrate the anniversary.

Al Bobrofsky also commended the department on the new 3R (Recruit, Retain and Reactivate) program. The department is working with the National Turkey Federation, and they have been taking their air gun facility around the state to Michigan state parks.

Duncan Wyeth also reminded the group that the Outdoor Adventure Center in Detroit is a terrific facility and recommends visiting the center. The center also has a simulated shooting exhibit. It would be great if they could find the funding to expand that exhibit to include a laser and auditory feedback with the air guns so blind individuals could participate.

If any council members have the names of specific equipment or vendors, they should send their information or suggestions to Linda Walter (walterL4@michigan.gov) at the Outdoor Adventure Center so she can further research these options.

Council members expressed their disappointment that the Outdoor Adventure Center planners did not think about accessibility in advance. Accessibility should always be part of the planning instead of an after-thought.

Duncan closed by stating that is why this council is so useful and important. Department staff, planners and others can and should reach out to members on the council for guidance, assistance or input because most council members have the experience or connections.

## DNR Accessibility Team (A-Team) Updates

Erica Moore gave the council an update on the status of the department's "Strategic Plan for Accessibility" and the process they used to incorporate the concepts from both the A-Team's version and the AAC's version into one plan. She also identified the areas of the council's version that were incorporated into the final draft.

The final draft of the plan has been distributed to all divisions within the DNR for their review, where it will then go to the department's management team for final approval by the Director.

Chair Briggs commented on the 'partnerships' portion of the plan. There are a lot of people, vendors, organizations, non-profits and corporations that are willing to help and donate to accessibility. It's a big step in the right direction and it's very exciting.

Duncan reiterated that council members have a lot of knowledge, expertise and connections that the department can utilize. He further mentioned that Michigan receives an assistive technology (AT) grant from the feds that goes directly into Michigan rehab and flows through to the state's Disability Rights Coalition where they coordinate this AT grant. The grant dollars go out to Centers for Independent Living around the state and each center has at least one AT specialist on staff. The Michigan Assistive Technology Loan fund also provides low cost loans to primary consumers to acquire assistive technology. The bottom line is this may be another resource for the department. They have a group of CIL specialists that meet on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Maybe the department would consider hosting a meeting of this group at the Outdoor Adventure Center with a focus on using them as a resource. They are the true specialists in the state in terms of cutting edge assistive technology for a broad range of disabilities.

Carolyn reported that the current chair of the AT group is Kelly Blackwell. She is from The Disability Network Capital Area Center. Carolyn will provide contact information for Kelly after the meeting.

Fred Wurtzel, guest, asked the council if there will be a public comment period on the strategic plan. Sharon responded that she has not discussed the plan with the DNR management team yet; however, she will discuss the need for a public comment period when it gets to that stage in the approval process. If it is decided to put the plan out for public comment, it will be announced.

Chair Briggs also commented that this plan has been scoured for many years so there has been a lot of input. The plan is also a living document that will constantly need to be revisited, reviewed and refreshed, especially as technology advances or is created and opportunities arise.

Sharon mentioned another opportunity to address the department or make public comment on any program that is managed by the DNR is through Natural Resources Commission meetings. These meetings are held once per month throughout the state and every department manager attends those meetings. There are other boards and committees that take public comment and those can be found on the DNR's web site under "Commissions, Boards and Committees." The Natural Resources Commission meetings are also live streamed through the Michigan United Conservation Clubs web site and on the DNR's web site.

Tom Tynan expressed an interest in attending the NRC meetings. Yolanda will provide him with the meeting dates, locations and the contact information for the NRC secretary to request interpretive services.

## **AAC COMMITTEE**

### **New Meeting Format**

Sharon reported that, effective in 2016, there will be a new format for AAC meetings. Subcommittee meetings will begin at 9:00 a.m. on an as-needed basis to allow these groups to meet prior to the start of the regular meeting. The regular meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. and adjourn no later than 12:30 p.m. This also allows the department's A-Team members the opportunity to attend and assist the subcommittees at their meetings, and it also reduces the amount of travel and frequency of meetings for the council and A-Team members. Subcommittees are also allowed to meet via conference call.

Sharon further commented that, with all the challenges this council has faced in the past with travel arrangements, the council will only have one travel meeting per year. This year the council will meet in the Upper Peninsula in August, and then we will consider rotating between the Upper Peninsula, northern lower and southern Michigan for future meetings. We also have to be cognizant of the fact that some members need to rely on transportation to/from the meetings so we need to adhere to the meeting schedules. If there are any locations that the council would like to visit, submit those to the Chair and Yolanda for future consideration.

Duncan requested that we coordinate traveling meetings with any outdoor events or department activities, programs or projects taking place in that immediate area, and include site visits whenever possible.

Sharon responded that the August meeting is being held during the U.P. State Fair in Escanaba. We will start coordinating this meeting early and, therefore, will need a firm commitment from all members, especially to secure lodging and travel arrangements.

### 2016 Meeting Dates

The council was reminded that the 2016 meetings have been set for:

February 16 at the Demmer Shooting Sports, Education and Training Center in Lansing  
May 24 at the new DNR Lansing Customer Service Center  
August 16 in the Upper Peninsula (Escanaba)  
December 13 at the DNR Lansing Customer Service Center

The new Lansing Customer Service Center is located at 4166 Legacy Parkway Drive (off Jolly Road) in Lansing.

Sharon reported that this will be the new DNR Customer Service Center for the immediate area, it has ample meeting space and the building is totally accessible. The Rose Lake facility will be closed down and staff will be moving to this new location.

### Elections

Chair Briggs reminded the council that his term as Chair has expired so it is time to elect a new Chair. Rick also mentioned that he may not be able to continue on the council. If he is unable to continue, Michael Harris will be the representative for Camp Liberty as well as the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans Association.

Chair Briggs reported that Scott Norris was nominated for Chair and asked if there were any objections or other nominations. None were offered.

*Duncan Wyeth moved for a consensus to elect Scott Norris as the new Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Council; Kim Woolridge seconded the motion; no objections were offered; the motion unanimously carried and Scott Norris was appointed as the new Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Council, effective immediately.*

Sharon thanked Rick for his years of service as the Chair, and for all of the accomplishments made by the council while under his leadership.

## AAC Subcommittees

Erica Moore reminded the council that AAC subcommittees were established at the council's August 2015 meeting. The purpose of today's meeting is to simply appoint members of the council to these various subcommittees. Council members indicated which subcommittees they were interested in participating on. Absent members will be contacted to identify their interests and appoint them to a subcommittee as well.

Logistically, not all subcommittees will have to meet in person. They can meet via conference call and only when there are issues or concerns to address (i.e. legislation). They will also have the opportunity to meet prior to each regular meeting under the new meeting format.

The A-Team also established subcommittees to coincide with the council's. This way, the chair of each A-Team subcommittee would also sit on the council's correlating subcommittee. However, department staff is available to assist or participate on any council subcommittee as the need or issues arise. The idea is that the department's subcommittees would move things forward to the council's subcommittees on an as-needed basis, or vice versa.

## Membership

Sharon commented that there has been some confusion as to members' terms. Since assuming responsibility for this council in 2015, it has been difficult to locate accurate records from those that handled the council in the past and have since left the department. Therefore, one of the first assignments to the AAC's Policy and Legislation subcommittee will be to work on the bylaws to address maximum membership, terms and staggered terms, appointments, etc. Membership on the council will also be addressed to ensure there is adequate and appropriate representation on the council.

There was a lot of discussion about representation on the council and various organizations, entities or groups that should be considered. Some council members commented that it may be best to make sure a certain disability community is represented instead of making sure certain organizations or people are on the council (i.e. blind, deaf, and mobility). Further discussion about council membership will be addressed at future meetings. In the meantime, council members should consider representation, make suggestions and reach out or seek out interested parties.

## **COUNCIL UPDATES**

Ken Buchholtz gave an update on some changes that were made to the "Hunt from Standing Vehicle Application for Persons with a Permanent Disability," to include language that the applicant is permanently disabled and unable to walk safely in a hunting situation.

Carolyn commented that the department must be careful and cognizant that individuals need to feel comfortable using this form. There could be individuals who have different ideas of when they can or cannot walk safely (i.e. walking in uneven terrain or temporarily disabled). Caution should be used on terminology but the changes made are an improvement in the right direction.

Duncan commented that an aging population also has changing needs so the terminology used should allow them the opportunity to be inclusive. Veterans that may have head trauma or PTSD also need to be considered.

Ken also discussed the Request to Transfer Bear and Elk Drawing forms. Because it takes so long to get a license under the point system for bear and elk (up to 8 years), no changes will be made to these two forms.

Rick asked if any portion of those permits that are set aside could be set aside for the terminally ill. Haupt responded that changes are being made, especially with the Pure Michigan Hunt, but he is not aware of any being set aside for the terminally ill or those with an extensive illness. The quota recommendations come up from the Wildlife Division for approval by the Natural Resources Commission.

After further discussion about this subject:

*Rick motioned that the DNR consider setting aside a 5% quota on bear and elk licenses for individuals with advanced illnesses as defined by the Public Health Code; Ken Buchholtz seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried and passed.*

Sharon suggested taking this issue back to the office (via Vicki Brown and Sara Cummings) to determine if a percentage of permits can be set aside for individuals with advanced illnesses.

Carolyn passed around an invitation to The Ann Arbor CIL's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 2016 Gala Benefit Auction being held on Saturday, March 12, at 6:00 p.m. at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She also asked if any members have ideas or items that can be auctioned off to contact her.

Rick mentioned that Camp Liberty is having their 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Camp Liberty Gala on Saturday, February 20. They are also having three to four open houses this year, and a woman's program in April. All council members are invited to attend any of the open houses and he encourages them to visit Camp Liberty to provide their input on resources and technology.

Diana Engle recognized Scott Norris for his recent achievement of receiving the Governor's Good Government Leadership Award

Sharon Ellis, the State of Michigan Safety and ADA Compliance Director, Department of Civil Rights, commented briefly about the new service animal legislation that went into effect on January 18. So far they have sent out about 50 applications and 30 passes. They are doing a lot of publicity and public information announcements about the new program. She asks that council members take a moment to look at the information on their new website at [www.michigan.gov/serviceanimals](http://www.michigan.gov/serviceanimals) and provide feedback to Sharon at [elliss1@michigan.gov](mailto:elliss1@michigan.gov) regarding their new site. This new legislation is going to be extremely helpful to organizations, business owners (i.e. restaurants) and the general public.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Donna Posont coordinates the Birding by Air and Beyond program and Environmental Interpretive Center at the University of Michigan, which has expanded into other programs (i.e. sensory butterfly garden, bugging by ear, treeing by ear, and other sensory programs). She would like to coordinate field trips and more valuable experiences for her groups and was wondering who she could work with in the DNR regarding accessible trails, backpacking and hiking opportunities. Mike Evanoff will meet with her after the meeting to provide her with information. Council members gave her other suggestions of who to contact or other programs around the state.



## **CLOSING COMMENTS**

Rick thanked everyone for their attendance, participation and input. He also thanked the Demmer Center for hosting this meeting and offering the council a tour of their facility. In closing, he thanked the council for their cooperation and input while he was chair.

## **ADJOURN**

Chair Norris requested a motion to adjourn.

*Kim Wooldridge motioned to adjourn; Duncan Wyeth seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried and the meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.*